

Tobacco-Free Cowboy to Visit Montana Schools

Utah rodeo journalist and health educator “Cowboy Ted” Hallisey will ride into Montana this week to encourage schoolchildren across the state not to use spit tobacco.

His visit is hosted by the Tobacco Use Prevention Program of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) as part of “Through with Chew Week,” a campaign designed to prevent and reduce spit tobacco addiction in Montana.

Cowboy Ted will tour schools to talk to kids about his eight rules for healthy living, which he equates with the eight-second rodeo ride. He will emphasize the risks of spit tobacco use.

"I want to reach kids with the message that spit tobacco is dangerous long before they ever start to use tobacco, before they become addicted," Hallisey said.

A recent survey of Montana high school students revealed that fewer than half believe that using spit tobacco puts one's health at risk. In fact, spit tobacco causes oral, esophageal, and stomach cancer as well as a number of tooth and gum diseases. Those who are addicted are 50 times more likely to develop oral cancer than nonusers.

Twenty-seven percent of Montana high school senior males use spit tobacco, according to Linda Lee, supervisor of the state Tobacco Use Prevention Program. As a whole, Montana men are addicted to spit tobacco at more than twice the national rate of 6 percent.

During Cowboy Ted's years in rodeo, he was addicted to spit tobacco, but while working as a radio personality in Utah he was asked to participate in an anti-tobacco program. The station urged him to quit using tobacco as part of an on-air feature. He did and now serves as a spokesman for the California Buck Tobacco Sponsorship and the National Tobacco-Free Rodeo projects.

Montanans who want to quit using spit tobacco can get help by calling the Montana Tobacco Quit Line, funded by DPHHS, at 1-866-485-QUIT (7848). The quit line provides free telephone counseling and nicotine replacement therapy.

Hallisey's program includes a 45-minute assembly encouraging kids to adopt the rules patterned after his Cowboy Ted Kids Club (www.cowboyted.com). The longtime cowboy and educator visits with students and teachers at schools and libraries nationwide each year. He will stop at schools in Sidney, Glendive, Lewistown, Helena, Superior, Pablo, Plains and Missoula on his five-day tour.

"My personal goal," he said, "is to touch the lives of a million children in my lifetime."

“Through With Chew Week” was established in 1989 by the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery to decrease spit tobacco use and increase awareness of the negative health effects of using these products.

Cowboy Ted will visit with children at the following times and locations:

- Monday, February 19, in Sidney and Richland County schools
 - **8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m., Fairview Elementary, 713 S Western Avenue**
 - **10 a.m. –10:45 a.m., Rau Elementary, HCR 57**
 - **11:30 a.m. –12:15 p.m., Savage Elementary, 368 South Mesa**
- Monday, February 19, in Glendive and Dawson County schools
 - **2:30 p.m. – 3:15 p.m., Washington Middle School, 500 North Meade Avenue**
 - **3:20 p.m. – 3:50 p.m. Meet with DCHS Trading Cards**
 - **4 p.m. – 5 p.m., Boys and Girls Club, 700 Little Street # 2**
- Tuesday, February 20, in Lewistown and Fergus County schools
 - **8:15 a.m. – 9 a.m., Junior High School, 914 West Main Street**
 - **9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m., Highland Park Elementary, 1312 7th Avenue North**
 - **11 a.m. – 11:45 p.m., Moore School, Moore, Mont., 15 minutes north on Highway 87**
 - **12:40 p.m. –1:45 p.m., Garfield Elementary, 415 East Boulevard**
 - **2 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Lewis & Clark Elementary, 212 Crystal Drive**
 - **2:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Lewis & Clark Elementary, 212 Crystal Drive**
- Wednesday, February 21, in Helena and Lewis and Clark County schools
 - **8:40 a.m. – 9:40 a.m., Jefferson School, 1023 Broadway**
 - **10:05 a.m. – 11:05 a.m., Jim Darcy School, 990 Lincoln Road West**
 - **1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m., Hawthorne School, 430 Madison Avenue**
 - **4 p.m. – 4:45 p.m., SACC- Jefferson School, 1023 Broadway**
- Thursday, February 22, in Superior and Mineral County schools
 - **9 a.m. – 9:45 a.m., Superior Elementary School, 1003 Fifth Avenue East**
 - **10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m., St. Regis Elementary School, 6 Tiger Street**
- Thursday, February 22, in Plains and Sanders County schools
 - **12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m., Plains High School, 412 Rittenour Street**
- Thursday, February 22, in Pablo and Lake County schools
 - **3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. Pablo After School Program, Pablo Elementary School, 608 Fourth Avenue East**

- Friday, February 23, in Missoula and Missoula County schools
 - **9 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Bonner Elementary School**, 9045 Highway 200
 - **10:15 a.m. – 11 a.m., Clinton Elementary School**, 20397 East Mullen Road
 - **2 p.m. – 2:45 p.m., Hellgate Elementary**, 2835 Flynn Lane